

CHAPTER 5: RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

5.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 3, a No-Action Alternative and five build alternatives (Alternatives E, F, G, I, and J) were studied in detail for impacts to the human and natural environments as part of the DEIS. Alternative J Modified was developed to address concerns raised during the public and agency review of the DEIS. Alternative J Modified was evaluated in the *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, published in October 2006. Based on the analysis provided in the DEIS and SDEIS, Alternative J Modified has been identified as the preferred alternative. This chapter summarizes the rationale for the selection of Alternative J Modified.

5.2 Rationale for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Elimination of Alternatives E and F

Alternatives E and F were eliminated based on residential displacements, local government opposition, and general lack of support. These two alternatives result in the greatest number of residential displacements, most of which are concentrated in the southern segment between Center Road (CR 300S) and the southern tie-in. Local officials and the general public expressed opposition to these alternatives primarily due to the high number of residential displacements when compared to the other alternatives. The resulting right-of-way costs and close proximity to the City of Kokomo were also cited as negatives of these alternatives. Alternatives E and F would require the displacement of 159 and 136 total properties, respectively.

Elimination of Alternative I

Alternative I was eliminated based on commercial displacements, and general lack of support. This alternative encompasses the greatest amount of right-of-way acreage. Also contributing to the elimination of this alternative was the high number of commercial and residential displacements primarily concentrated in the vicinity of Smith Road (CR 300 N). This alternative received little or no support from either local public officials or the general public. This alternative would displace a total of 109 properties.

Comparison of Alternatives G and Alternative J Modified

Alternative G and Alternative J Modified, which share much of the same alignment and received the most support, were compared closely, focusing on differences in travel time, proximity to the existing US 31 corridor, public support, and impacts.

Travel Time

Alternative J Modified travel time and overall project length is less than the travel time and overall length of Alternative G. As such, Alternative J Modified provides a reduced travel time and better serves the needs of the traveling public as shown in Table 4.1-10. The 0.4 minute travel time savings between Alternative J Modified and Alternative G equates to approximately 30,000 hours annually.

Proximity to the Existing US 31 Corridor

Traffic modeling efforts determined that, in general, the closer a bypass alternative is to the existing US 31 facility, the greater the number of vehicles that are likely to utilize the bypass. Although these two alternatives share the same southern and far northern alignment, Alternative J Modified is approximately one-half mile closer to the existing US 31 corridor through the middle segment. Because of its closer proximity to the existing US 31 corridor, Alternative J Modified is anticipated to attract more traffic and, therefore, decrease congestion and improve safety along the existing corridor.

Local Public Officials and Public Support

Local public officials and the general public overwhelmingly support Alternative J Modified.

Impacts

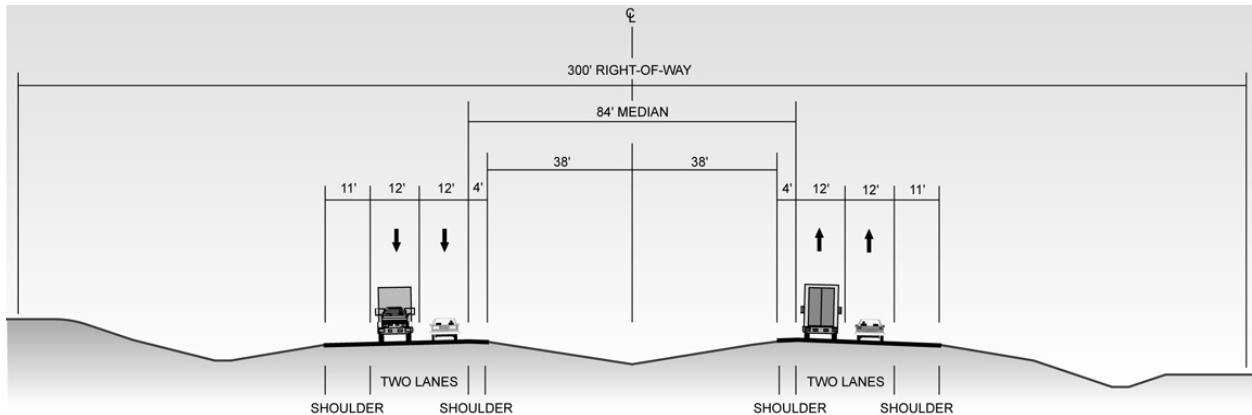
As described in detail in Chapter 4, Alternative J Modified is anticipated to impact fewer major utilities and archaeological sites, less planned future residential development acreage, and less linear feet of stream. The addition of an interchange at Touby Pike resulted in the impact of additional agricultural and prime farmland acreage. This interchange was added based on comments received by local officials. Its presence will improve access to the area, maintain emergency response access to the Kokomo Municipal Airport, and allow for continued bus service.

Based on this comparison, Alternative J Modified was identified as the US 31 Kokomo Corridor Project preferred alternative.

5.3 Elements of Preferred Alternative

The following is a description of the major elements of Alternative J Modified. This alternative provides a new fully limited access freeway facility located approximately two miles east of the existing US 31 alignment on the south end and approximately 1.2 miles east of the existing US 31 alignment on the north end. The typical cross section for this alternative includes two 12 foot through lanes and an 11 foot outside shoulder in each direction, and an 84 foot wide depressed median (dimension includes two four foot inside shoulders and a 76 foot grass median ditch). This typical cross section is contained within 300 feet of total right-of-way (Figure 5.3-1).

Figure 5.3-1
Typical Cross Section for Alternative J Modified



The southern terminus is south of SR 26 in Tipton County in the vicinity of CR 600 N and the northern terminus for Alternative J Modified is along existing US 31 north of the US 35 northern junction in the vicinity of CR 550 N. Alternative J Modified is approximately 13.7 miles in length and includes the following six interchanges (south to north):

- Southern terminus – directional
- SR 26 – diamond with 800 foot ramp terminal spacing
- Markland Avenue (US 35/SR 22) – diamond with 1,200 foot ramp terminal spacing
- East Boulevard (CR 100 S) – diamond with 800 foot ramp terminal spacing
- Touby Pike – diamond with 800 foot ramp terminal spacing
- US 35 northern junction – directional

The proposed facility requires existing cross-streets to be converted to interchanges or over/underpasses or, in some cases, closed. The following road closures (no direct access or crossing of the new facility) are associated with Alternative J Modified (south to north):

- South CR 100 E
- CR 250 N

The following cross-streets are maintained by either an overpass or underpass (south to north):

- CR 600 N (Tipton County) – overpass
- CR 500 S/CR 700 N (County Line) – overpass
- CR 150 E – underpass
- Center Road (CR 300 S) – underpass
- Southway Boulevard (CR 200 S) – overpass
- Carter Street (CR 50 N) – overpass
- Sycamore Street – underpass
- Morgan Street (CR 200 N) – overpass
- CR 400 N – underpass
- North CR 50 E – underpass

See Appendix B Sheets 1-15 for detailed Alternative B information.

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